

specimen was also marked and released at this latter point and recaptured a few yards to the right on the morning of the 21st, the only specimen recaptured at that time. It was freshly emerged at capture.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of all the specimens captured and released at the roosting site, fourteen in all, is that every one of them was a male. Thus we do not know that any female took part in the mass roosting behaviour, but it seems improbable. There seems to have been no correlation between success or failure in recapture and the age and condition of the marked butterflies.

Under normal circumstances the behaviour of the butterflies was similar every evening. Up to a dozen butterflies would jostle for position on a single plant. Those that were displaced or could not gain a foothold would fly away, and, if continually unsuccessful, settle singly. The only apparent attraction of the communal roosting plant was the presence of other individuals.

About a week after leaving Watamu we had the opportunity on two evenings (the 1st and 2nd September) to observe closely similar behaviour in the danaid butterfly *Amauris niavius* in the Moshi Forest near Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. In this case communal roosting took place on horizontal twigs or branches at or near ground level on the banks on either side of a forest road.

Notes and Observations

THE FERAL FOODPLANT OF LEAST CARPET, *IDAEA VULPINARIA* HERRICH-SCHAFFER. — Mr. West is much to be congratulated on his discovery of feral larvae of this species, with *Alyssum saxatile* L. as their foodplant (*Ent. Rec.*, 86:258). But in solving one mystery he has uncovered another. This plant, which is popularly known as Golden Alyssum, is not, according to the usual authorities, a British native but only at most an occasional garden escape. Records of *Idaea vulpinaria* in Kent — actually near Bexley and Eltham — go back to 1831, when *A. saxatile* must have been very uncommon even if it had been introduced at all. The recorded spread of the moth southwards in Kent and most recently into Surrey may indeed well be due to its adoption of this now common suburban rockery plant as a foodplant; but surely it must have used something else in earlier times. The early association with *Ulmus campestris* is well attested, and the narrow lane at Slade Green, where I found the moth in abundance at rest on elm leaves on 4th August, 1954, was according to my recollection a most unlikely place for any growth of *A. saxatile*: there was, indeed, little in sight except overgrown elm hedges and nettles! But, given the later onset of Dutch elm disease, the species was no doubt wise to find an alternative foodplant. — R. F. BRETHERTON, Folly Hill, Birtley Green, Bramley, Guildford, Surrey, GU5 0LE.